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PRESS RELEASE

AMBASSADOR MORIARTY EMPHASIZES THE ROLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN DISASTER MANAGEMENT

DHAKA, AUGUST 13 -- U.S. Ambassador to Bangladesh James F. Moriarty and Minister of Food and Disaster Management Dr. Abdur Razzaque inaugurated a seminar today on “The Role of Local Governments in Disaster Preparedness and Mitigation.” The U.S. Government, through USAID, is funding a \$2 million project, implemented by the NGO Rupantar, in 159 local government offices in the five districts most affected by Cyclone Sidr. The project, “Improving Local Level Governance by Strengthening Union Parishads and Creating Citizens’ Awareness (ILLG),” will enhance the skills of local government officials to budget and plan for disasters. ILLG will increase local government capacity to oversee public resources and ensure better delivery of public services after natural disasters. This project will benefit the more than 1.5 million people living in the 155 union parishads and four municipalities in the project area.

Ambassador Moriarty stressed the importance of decentralization to local governments to ensure a smooth recovery and reconstruction effort after a natural disaster. The participants discussed common challenges faced by local governments during a natural disaster and how to provide more authority to the local government to encourage decentralization and efficient service delivery. The United States, through USAID, is providing \$75 million to help Cyclone Sidr-affected people rebuild their homes and livelihoods. The ILLG Project is funded under the Sidr reconstruction program. In addition to supporting Sidr victims, the U.S. Government is also providing \$3.8 million in emergency disaster-relief support, including two million liters of clean drinking water, to people affected by cyclonic storm Aila in May 2009.

The U.S. Government, through USAID, is working to improve the lives of the people of Bangladesh, especially the very poor. USAID funds programs in Bangladesh in five broad areas:

improving health and pre-primary education, creating income opportunities for rural poor, supporting good governance, enhancing food security, and strengthening disaster preparedness and providing emergency assistance following natural disasters. The U.S. Government has provided more than \$5 billion in assistance to Bangladesh since 1971. In 2009, USAID's planned assistance will total about \$172 million, including specific assistance for people living in the Cyclone Sidr-affected region.

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Note: A Bangla translation of this press release is also available at the American Center. If you are interested in the translation, please call the American Center Press Section, Tel: 8837150-4, Fax: 9885688; e-mail: DhakaPA@state.gov; Website: [http:// dhaka.usembassy.gov](http://dhaka.usembassy.gov)